

invention and its practical application to thereby enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. All such
5 modifications and variations are within the scope of the invention as determined by the appended claims when interpreted in accordance with the breadth to which they are fairly, legally, and equitably entitled.

10 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a print of a digital image registered by a registrant in response to an order from a viewer comprising:

15 a first step of receiving the digital image from the registrant;

a second step of registering the received digital image;

a third step of showing the registered digital image to the viewer;

20 a fourth step of accepting the order for the print of the digital image from the viewer;

a fifth step of producing the ordered print of the digital image; and

25 a sixth step of billing the print charge to the registrant.

2. The method according to claim 1,

wherein the first step includes a step of receiving a digital image with a discrimination denoting that
30 the print charge of the digital image is to be paid by the registrant;

wherein the second step includes a step of recording the digital image with the discrimination together with the discrimination; and

35 wherein the sixth step includes a step of billing the print charge of the print of the digital image with the discrimination to the registrant.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the third step includes a step of permitting only a viewer with a predetermined identification to view the image with the discrimination.

4. The method according to claim 2, wherein the fourth step includes a step of allowing only a viewer with a predetermined identification to order the print of the digital image with the discrimination.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the first step is carried out through a computer communication with the registrant.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the third and the fourth steps are carried out through a computer communication with the viewer.

7. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of setting a limit to the order from the viewer, wherein the fourth step includes a step for accepting the order leading to the sixth step only when the order is within the limit.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is a sum of print charge.

9. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is the number of times of the orders.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein the limit is the number of ordered prints.

11. The method according to claim 7 further comprising a step of billing the print charge exceeding the limit to the viewer.

12. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a
step of making it possible to accept a print order whose
print charge is paid by the viewer and a step of billing
5 the print charge to the viewer.

13. The method according to claim 12 further comprising a
step of adding the number of prints of a digital image
on the viewer's account to that of the same digital
10 image on the register's account, wherein the fifth
step produces the sum of the number of the of prints
on such a digital image.

14. The method according to claim 1 further comprising a
15 step of setting a time limit to the fourth step, whereby
the fourth step accepts the order leading to the sixth
step only when the order is made within the time limit.

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of
20 orders are acceptable for a period, and wherein the
fifth step produces the prints by summing up the orders
within the period with respect to each digital image.

16. The method according to claim 1 further comprising
25 a step of accepting an order for purchasing a product
of digital contents relating to the digital image
and a step of selling the product by copying the
digital contents on a recording medium of the
viewer.

30 17. A method of providing prints of a digital image
registered by a registrant in response to orders from
a plurality of viewers comprising:
a first step of receiving the digital image from the
35 registrant;
a second step of registering the received digital
image;

a third step of showing the registered digital image to the viewers;

a fourth step of accepting the orders for the print of the digital image from the viewers;

5 a fifth step of summing up the orders accepted within the period; and

a sixth step of producing the prints based on the fifth step.

10 18. The method according to claim 17, wherein at last the fourth to the sixth steps are repeated.

15 19. The method according to claim 17 further comprising a step of setting a time limit to the fourth step, whereby the fourth step accepts the order leading to the sixth step only when the order is made within the time limit.

20 20. The method according to claim 17, wherein the third step includes a step for permitting only a viewer with a predetermined identification.

25 21. The method according to claim 17 further comprising a step of billing a print charge to the registrant based on the fifth step.

22. An apparatus for providing a print of a digital image comprising:

an image input that receives a digital image from an image registrant;

30 a memory that records the received digital image; an image output that outputs the digital image in order to make a viewer view the recorded digital image;

35 a print order acceptor that accepts an order for a print of the viewed digital image;

an image data output that outputs an image data of the ordered digital image to a printer; and

a billing data output that outputs a data for billing the print charge to the registrant.

5 23. A method of providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

10 a first step of receiving information of the image from the registrant through a computer communication;

a second step of producing the print of the image based on the information; and

15 a third step of billing a print charge to the registrant.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the information of the image is a kind of information including an image data of a digital image.

20 25. The method according to claim 23, wherein the information of the image includes information that specifies the image.

25 26. The method according to claim 25, wherein the specified image is an image recorded on a film.

27. The method according to claim 25, wherein the specified image is a digital image.

30 28. The method according to claim 27 further comprising a step of obtaining the image data of the specified digital image from outside.

35 29. The method according to claim 23 further comprising a step of receiving information regarding the kind of the recording medium on which the digital contents purchased by the contents purchaser are recorded.

30. The method according to claim 29 further comprising
a step of selecting a paper for the print and contents
of the print other than the image based on the
information regarding the kind of the recording
medium, and
a step of printing the contents of the print other
than the image in a predetermined area of the paper.

31. The method according to claim 23 further comprising a
step of receiving information to deliver the print to
the purchaser.

32. A method of providing a print of an image registered
by a registrant in relation to a product of digital
contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased
by a purchaser comprising:

a first step of accepting a contact from the
purchaser with an authorization by the registrant;
a second step of producing the print of the image
based on the authorization; and
a third step of billing the print charge to the
registrant.

33. The method according to claim 32, wherein the
authorization includes information regarding the
image.

34. The method according to claim 32, wherein the
authorization includes a password for request to
produce the print.

35. The method according to claim 32, wherein the first step
includes a step of accepting the contact from the
purchaser through a personal computer of the purchaser.

36. An apparatus providing a print of an image registered

by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

an image information input that receives information
of an image connected with the digital contents
purchased by a purchaser; and
a billing data output that outputs a data for billing
the print charge to registrant.

37. A method of providing a print of an image registered by a registrant in relation to a product of digital contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased by a purchaser comprising:

a first step of selling the product of digital
contents to a purchaser; and
a second step of outputting information relating to
the image through a computer communication for the
purpose of producing the print.

38. The method according to claim 37, wherein the first step includes a step of copying the digital contents on a recording medium of the purchaser.

39. The method according to claim 37 further comprising a step of making the purchaser select one of a plurality of images relating to the digital contents.

40. The method according to claim 37, wherein the information includes an image data of the digital image.

41. The method according to claim 37, wherein the information includes information that specifies the image.

42. The method according to claim 37 further comprising a step of getting information necessary for

delivering the print to the purchaser; and
a step of outputting information for the delivery
through a computer communication.

5 43. An apparatus for providing a print of an image registered
by a registrant in relation to a product of digital
contents to be sold by the registrant and purchased
by a purchaser comprising:

10 a contents seller that sells digital contents to a
purchaser;

a delivery information input for inputting an
information for deliver the print;

15 an information output that outputs an information of
the image relating to the product of digital contents
and the information for deliver.

20 44. A method for providing a purchaser of a product of the
digital contents with a print of an image registered
by a registrant relating to the product of digital
contents to comprising:

a first step of having the registrant sell the
product of digital contents to the purchaser;

25 a second step of having a printer receive
information relating to the registered image from
the registrant;

a third step of having the printer produce the print
of the image for the purchaser based on the
information; and

30 a fourth step of having the printer bill the print
charge to the registrant.

45. The method according to claim 44, wherein the second
step is carried out through a computer communication
with the registrant.

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46. The method according to claim 44 further comprising
a step of having the registrant issue an

identification of the image to the purchaser, and
a step of having the printer receive the
identification from the purchaser.

- 5 47. The method according to claim 44 further comprising
a step of having the registrant issue a password to
the purchaser, and wherein the third step is only
effective when the password is input to the
printer.